

Response to Arguments

1. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-26 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless —

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

3. Claims 1, 2 and 4-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Anderson et al. (4,602,657) (hereinafter Anderson).

4. Anderson teaches a pipe coupling flange (40) comprising a central bore (48)a first and second port (44, 46) a take-off channel for linking the first port with the central bore, a feed channel for linking the first port with the second port (Figs. 3 and 6). A third port (43) connected to the second port via feed channel (66). The ports of the pipe coupling are adapted to receive rising stem valves. Anderson further teaches a transducer in communication with the inlet and outlet channels of the pipe coupling.

5. Claims 1, 4 and 5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Rench et al. (5,449,294) (hereinafter Rench).

6. Rench teaches a pipe coupling comprising a central bore (22), first (19) and second (not numbered) ports, a take-off channel (24) for linking the first port with the central bore, a feed channel for linking the first port with the second port, where in the second port links with the exterior.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

7. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

8. Claims 3 and 8-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Anderson or Rench in view of Suckow (4,879,912).

Anderson or Rench teaches all the features of the instant invention except for the fourth port to receive a pipe joint and a feed channel connecting the third port and the fourth port. It would be obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide additional ports with channels connecting the port since the use of multiple ports would help accommodate more valves for performing and operating additional valves. As to providing a direct mounting of the transducer or to the bridge structure, it would be within the scope of a skilled individual to adopt any known mounting arrangement in order to reduce components thus reduce weight of the device. It would further be obvious to a skilled individual to integrally form the flange with the process pipe since such an arrangement would facilitate the user to easily remove and replace a different flanged coupling for may be a different flow range. As to the pipe coupling comprising a kit of parts or the bolting of the pipe flanges, Suckow teaches such a structure. It would be obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to use a flanged structure of Suckow with the integral manifold structure to accommodate the valves in the plurality ports since such an arrangement would eliminate the use of multiple bulky parts that add on the weight.

Conclusion

9. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to HARSHAD PATEL whose telephone number is (571)272-2187. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday (6:30 AM-5:00 PM).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Edward Lefkowitz can be reached on (571) 272-2180. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Harshad Patel/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 2855